

**A SHORT HISTORY  
OF THE  
CHURCH OF ST. JOHN  
THE EVANGELIST**

**PINCHER CREEK  
ALBERTA**



1.00  
PRICE ~~1.00~~



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## FOREWORD

When history assumes the proportions of almost three quarters of a century, in such a newly-established country as Alberta, it becomes more than purely a matter of interest to preserve it. Memories fade, few of those who can speak from personal knowledge remain, and only written records can span the years with any certainty from then on.

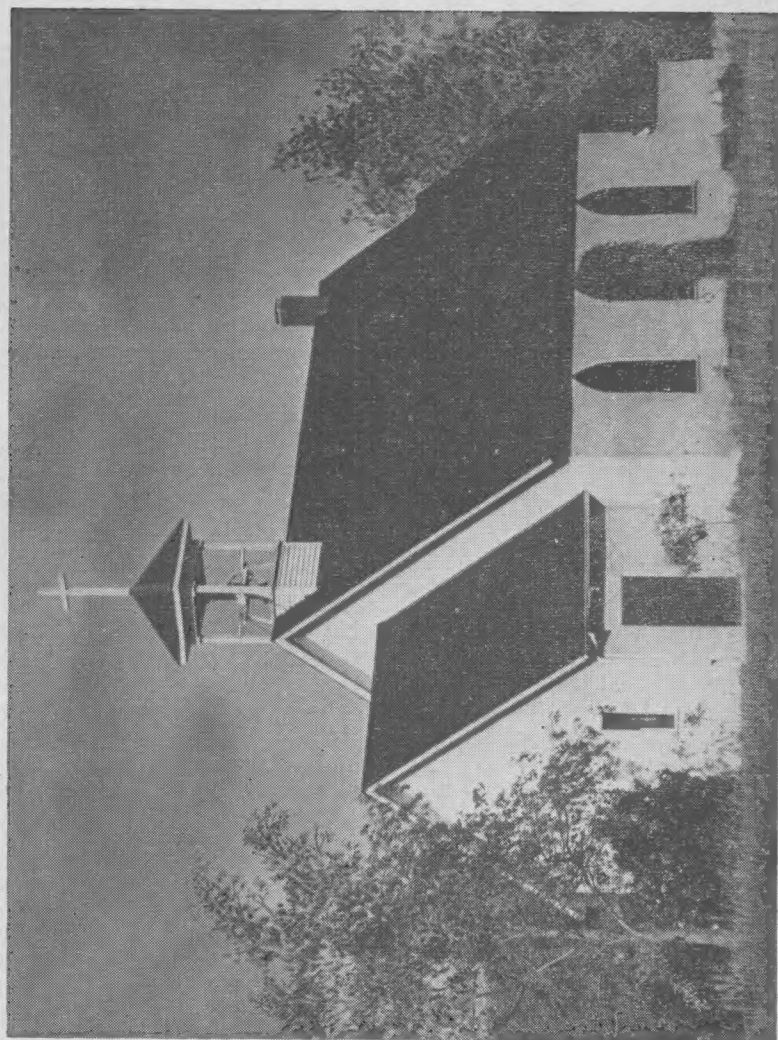
We are particularly fortunate in St. John's in having excellent Church records which tell of the life of the Anglican community from the earliest days of settlement, and which corroborate what many of our older members can recount from their treasures of reminiscence. This recording of our history by our predecessors we value, and intend to perpetuate.

We are, therefore, especially grateful for the diligent work put into the compilation of this present little booklet by Mrs. C. Lynch-Staunton, and commend it with gratitude and pride to all interested in the life of our parish in and around Pincher Creek.

ERIC W. SCOTT,

Rector

October, 1954.



## ST. JOHN'S - PINCHER CREEK

The first service of the Church of England in the settlement which was afterwards formed into this Parish was held on Easter Day 1883, by the Rev. S. Trivett at the home of Captain F. M. Scobie, a rancher living near what is now Pincher Creek.

Services seem to have been held at intervals of about one month, but there was no resident clergyman, Mr. Trivett being missionary to the Indians on the Blood Reserve 40 miles away. It was during the time he was ministering to the people in this settlement that the proposal was made to build a church and a meeting was held on August 26, 1883, at the home of Captain Scobie, at which the then Bishop of Saskatchewan, Dr. McLean, presided. The minutes of that meeting show that the original proposal was to build a church to cost not less than \$1,000.00, towards which the Bishop promised a grant of \$150.00. The total promised at the inauguration of the work was \$1,511.35. This was augmented by the proceeds of a concert amounting to \$120.00 and the offertory at the opening of the church of \$50.00, making a total of \$1,681.35. (From the sums contributed it would seem that the original settlers were to a great extent people of means, and willing to use their money for the church's work). The actual cost of the church building appears to have been \$2,800.00. This far exceeded the original intention, but a large part of the material had to be hauled by team from Medicine Hat, then the nearest railway station. The freight and teaming alone cost \$500.

The church was opened for divine service on August 17, 1884, a congregation of 60 being present and four clergymen—Archdeacon Grisdale, later Bishop of Q'uappelle, being of the number. During the remainder of 1884 and up to February 1885 Rev. Trivett continued to hold monthly services. His last service was on February 22, 1885, at which time he was presented with a purse of \$60.00.

During 1885-86-87 services were conducted at intervals by the Rev. Canon McKay, Rev. H. T. Bourne and Rev. R. Hilton of the Blood Indian Reservation and of Ft. Macleod. On May 22, 1887, Archdeacon Pinkham, Bishop-elect of Saskatchewan, held his first service in St. John's Church. Again on April 1, 1888, Bishop Pinkham held service (Easter Day). At a meeting held after the service the Bishop informed the congregation that he had received a communication from the Rev. H. Havelock Smith of Regina, signifying his willingness to become the clergyman of this district, and the meeting unanimously resolved that the matter of the appointment of a clergyman to the parish be left

entirely with the Bishop. At this meeting Judge J. F. McLeod was elected first Lay Delegate to Synod from this parish.

On April 15, 1888, the Rev. R. Hilton of Macleod held his last service as in charge of the district.

On May 6, 1888, the Rev. H. H. Smith held his first service in the Church of St. John the Evangelist as the Incumbent of the Parish, and now after waiting for five years for a resident clergyman in their midst, the people of this district had a shepherd to live among them and devote all his energies to the work of the church in this vast district.

In his first quarterly diocesan report the Rev. Smith states: "Having been appointed to the mission of Pincher Creek on April 30th and scarcely being two months in the field my quarterly returns must needs be scant. My special work has been discovering the limitations of the Mission, but this I fancy is a hopeless undertaking as it is impossible, where the ministrations of the church are so prized and the sight of a clergyman so rare an occasion, to say thus far shalt thou go and no further. I find that in this district, which I have put down as 1500 square miles, there are a goodly number of church people well to do and anxious to aid and push forward the work of the church, if someone takes the initiative. This person must be the clergyman. The great difficulty, however, lies in the distances apart of the settlers. Visiting can only be done in the saddle, and since my arrival I have spent nearly the whole time in going about. I hope to be able to report progress in the opening up of outside missions as I have two points in prospective, one nine miles and the other 20 miles distant."

There were 19 anglican families in the whole misson at this time and 22 unmarried members. The Rector's stipend was \$540.00 per annum.

On January 20, 1889, during the visitation of the Bishop, a special meeting of the congregation was held to discuss the advisability of removing the church to a site in or near the Village of Pincher Creek, the original site being a mile away and inconvenient to the villagers. The Bishop promised a grant of \$100.00, and he and the Rector were asked to try to arrange with the Government for a site on the N.W.M.P. Reserve. This same year the project of moving the church was accomplished. An acre of ground was granted west of the N.W.M.P. Reserve, but in obtaining this site, the congregation forfeited their right to the 40 acres granted by the Government to other churches.

The church was moved to the new site at a cost of \$425.00. In 1890 the church building was declared free of debt.

On Ascension Day, 1890, the ladies of the Parish organized under the name of "The Church Women's Guild of St. John the Evangelist's Parish," with the object of promoting church work and interest in the Parish. The following names appear as original members: Mesdames Scobie, White-Frazer, L. Garnett, Geddes, Martin Macleod, H. J. Smith, Miss Kerr (afterwards Mrs. Alfred Wilson) and Miss Smith. This organization soon proved its value, meeting weekly to sew. They were much in demand by the batchelors of the district, to mend and make clothing, and from time to time paid in the money earned to what was the next important development, namely the purchase of a Rectory. It was largely through their efforts that this was obtained.

At a meeting of the congregation on September 20, 1891, a committee was appointed to obtain information as to the cost of building a vicarage, but nothing definite was accomplished for some time. On February 9, 1892, a vestry meeting was held to define the boundaries of the Parish of St. John the Evangelist, Pincher Creek, in accordance with the constitution of the Synod of the Diocese of Calgary, which became an incorporated body on January 25, 1892. The following boundaries were agreed to: At a point called Sulphur Spring (west of Frank) the line running easterly along the southern bank of the Middle Fork, or Crow's Nest River, to its confluence with the North Fork of Old Man River, thence along the southern bank of said Old Man River to a point where it touches the western line of the Peigan Indian Reserve. This to form the northern boundary.

Thence running south along the said western line of the Peigan Reserve to its southwest corner, and from there in a straight line in a south easterly direction to the mouth of the Dry Wood Fork of the Waterton River. This to form the eastern boundary.

Thence in a south westerly direction along the northern bank of the Waterton river to a point adjacent to the Waterton Lakes, being the point nearest to the foot of the first lake. This to form the southern boundary.

Thence running northerly along the base of the Rocky mountains to our starting point, the Sulphur Springs. This to form the western boundary.

On March 16, 1892, there being on hand \$793.67, a committee composed of Messrs. White-Frazer, G. W. Gill and R. W. Kerr were appointed with full powers to carry on to completion the building of a vicarage.

At a meeting of the Parishoners on April 15, 1892, the com-

mittee reported and made the suggestion that instead of building as proposed, purchase should be made of the property of Mr. Frank Hinton\*, consisting of a plot of land, about 27 acres, one-half mile from Pincher Creek, on which land was a one and one-half storey house containing five rooms, also stables and sheds, for the sum of \$1,400.00. A resolution was passed to complete the purchase, paying down the amount of hand (\$800.00) and to raise the balance by mortgage on the property. In March, 1893, the Ladies Guild paid over towards this debt the sum of \$226.00. At Easter, 1900, the Parish became self supporting, the S.P.G. grant being entirely withdrawn.

In May, 1900, it was proposed to put a stone foundation underneath the church.

In 1901 the church was refurnished with ash pews. At this time it was decided to sell part of the property by lots, the proceeds to go to the vicarage fund. In 1903, through the efforts of Mr. Jonas Jones and congregational donations, a new organ was obtained, equal in tone and appearance to any organ in the Diocese.

On the Feast of St. Matthias, February 24, 1904, a tragic blow fell on the Parish by the sudden death of the Rector, the Rev. Canon Havelock Smith, who died while preparing refreshments for the arrival of the Bishop. Thus ended 15 years and 10 months labours in one of the largest parishes in the diocese of one who spent his life in the Master's footsteps, "going about doing good." Only the day before he had returned from St. Martin's, Livingstone, chilled through and very tired from the long ride by saddle horse. The funeral was held on February 26th with Bishop Pinkham reading the service.

After the funeral a meeting was held to extend condolences to the bereaved family, and a resolution was passed to pay the stipend of the late Canon to his widow until Easter. At this meeting the Bishop was asked to choose a successor to Canon Smith, at a stipend of \$900.00. The Rev. G. H. Webb accepted the rectorship and was inducted by the Venerable Archdeacon Webb on June 19, 1904.

From 1888 services had been held regularly at Livingstone, and in 1904 Fishburn and Chipman Creek was formed into a separate parish, served by the Rector of Pincher Creek. During 1904-5 various church furnishings were donated, including books, altar frontals and altar rails of ash. The communion vessels, presented by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Faithorn at this time, were first used at the celebration of the Holy Communion on

\* At present occupied by Mr. and Mrs. H. Beere.



June 18, 1904.

The Rev. G. H. Webb resigned his charge in October, 1905, and Rev. S. A. Lawrence was appointed Rector at the same stipend.

In 1907 the cemetery was surveyed and a fixed rate was set for plots in July of that year.

The Rector resigned on September 23, 1907, and the Rev. W. G. James was inducted as Rector in November, 1907.

In 1909 a fence was erected around the church acre and a screen placed to guard the East Window in the Chancel (now on the south side of the pulpit). This stained glass window had been given by Captain and Mrs. Scobie as a thankoffering for the survival of an infant daughter, after the loss of several children.

During the same year a branch of the Church Women's Auxiliary was formed at the home of Mrs. Jim Smith.

On March 25, 1910, the Rev. W. G. James offered his resignation, and in July, 1910, the Rev. J. Hull became Rector of the Parish.

At the annual meeting on January 25, 1911, it was decided to build a new Rectory, and four lots were purchased from Mr. Cyr for the sum of \$2,000.00. During 1911-12 the new Rectory was built.

In May, 1912, Rev. Mr. Hull resigned and the Rev. J. N. Gretton took charge of the parish and resided in the new Rectory (one block east of the church), the old Rectory at the east end of town being rented. During Mr. Gretton's rectorship the proposal to build a Parish Hall was constantly discussed, and a new porch was added to the west end of the church.

On January 15, 1917, the Rev. J. N. Gretton resigned, and after a brief term by Rev. C. W. Smith, the Rev. A. W. Mac Michael, of the Southern Alberta Mission, took charge of the Parish.

In October, 1919, it was proposed to place a memorial stained glass window in the church at the East End, in memory of the men of the parish who gave their lives during the Great War, 1914-1918. This and the bronze plaque containing the names of the men were given mainly through the efforts of Mr. Harold Butcher (a veteran of the 1914-1918 War) and donations provided by the parishioners and district.

In June, 1920, Mr. MacMichael left Pincher Creek for England, and was succeeded by the Rev. A. E. Lane-Sansom. It was during Mr. Sansom's incumbency that the Memorial Window

was placed in position, and the original Window of St. John, given by the Scobie family, was placed in the South light, with Mr. Scobie's consent.

Mr. Sansom was succeeded in 1924 by the Rev. George Biddle.

The Vestry met on February 26, 1926, to discuss the offer of Mrs. J. J. Scott re the purchase of a house to be used as a Parish Hall.

At the April meeting the building of a new Rectory on the church lots was proposed, and permission was obtained from the Synod office, Calgary, to build, provided the cost would be covered by the sale of the then present Rectory †. The work was authorized by the Vestry on July 16, 1926.

At the August meeting the Rev. Neville Blunt was accepted as successor to Mr. Biddle. During the vacancy between Mr. Biddle's departure and Mr. Blunt's arrival, Rev. Mr. Lord of Brocket, Lay Reader Mr. E. C. Tucker, and Rev. Mr. Adams-Cooper conducted services.

The Rev. N. Blunt was inducted as incumbent on October 19, 1927, by the Lord Bishop of Calgary.

In March, 1929, a fund was started for the stuccoing of the church.

On April 17, 1929, Mr. Blunt announced his appointment to the Parish of Innisfail, and the appointment of Rev. W. R. Jeffcott to Pincher Creek, to take effect on June 1, 1929.

The stuccoing of the church was completed in 1929.

At Christmastime, that same year, the Junior W. A. presented a pair of cruets for Communion services.

On Christmas Day, 1931, Dr. and Mrs. W. L. Walkley presented, as a thank offering, a beautiful pair of brass candlesticks.

On May 3, 1932, one of our early parishioners, Mrs. S. M. Hinton, was presented with a gift in recognition of her services to St. John's Church in many capacities, and on April 20, 1933, Mrs. Alfred Wilson was presented with a life membership of the W.A. as a token of the love and esteem of the members of the church, for her long and splendid work in the Parish. Mrs. Wilson was the second oldest member of St. John's Church, with nearly fifty years of service, only outdistanced by Mr. Walter Faithorn at that time, who was a resident in Pincher Creek before St. John's was built.

In June, 1933, the south side of the church was refinished by the men of the Parish through the generosity of the Domin-

† This Rectory was later sold to Mr. R. Y. Laidlaw, and is now occupied by Mrs. Laidlaw and Mr. Jim Scott and family.

ion W.A. The ladies provided refreshments for the inner man during the operations, and the same year proposals were made to celebrate suitably the Golden Jubilee of this little church.

The Golden Jubilee of St. John's Church was worthily marked in the summer of 1934. The celebration began on the morning of Sunday, June 17, when the Bishop of the Diocese, Right Rev. L. R. Sherman, officiated, assisted by the Rector, Rev. W. R. Jeffcott. Mr. E. V. Tucker, Lay Reader, acted as Bishop's Chaplain. With a courteous gesture the United Church withdrew their evening service, and at 7:30 p.m. a joint gathering took place on the lawn surrounding the church. The service was conducted by the Rector and the Bishop preached the sermon. At the request of the Bishop, the Rev. N. W. Whitmore, Pastor of the United Church, read the second lesson. Mrs. S. A. Tucker was the organist at both services, having acted in this capacity for many years.

On Monday evening, June 18, a great banquet was held in the Framac Hall, with over 300 people attending. Mr. R. Y. Laidlaw, People's Warden at that time, and Mr. C. F. Carswell, Rector's Warden, spoke of the work done in the Parish during the year, particularly the redecorating and re-lining of the interior of the church as a memorial of the Jubilee.

The Rev. Whitmore brought greetings from the United Church, and the Rev. Father Panhaleux, O.M.I., conveyed the good wishes of the congregation of St. Michael's. Mr. A. L. Freebairn wrote a poem especially for the occasion, which he read, entitled "From Out Its Walls." Other speakers included The Bishop, the Rector, Mr. Stephen Lunn and Mrs. C. Lynch-Staunton, president of the Guild.

In April, 1938, the Rector resigned to go to All Saint's Church, Mission City, B.C., Mr. A. O. Morrison, a student, taking his place on May 15th for the summer of 1938.

The Rev. J. F. O'Neill was appointed to the Parish on April 30, 1939, but left in September to volunteer for service in World War II.

During the war years the Rev. Canon Axon of Macleod ministered to the spiritual needs of the Parish, in addition to his own Parish work.

Another milestone in the history of St. John's was marked on June 25, 1944, when the Diamond Jubilee of the Church was celebrated with appropriate services, a banquet in the Masonic Hall, and an appeal for funds to install a heating system in the church, to mark the anniversary.

The Rev. Cyril Clarke was appointed Rector on February 7,

1946, and it was during his incumbency that the all-embracing title of "The Foothills Mission" was given to the parishes of Pincher Creek, Cowley, Lundbreck and Livingstone. The Foothills Mission became self supporting on May 1, 1946.

In March 1947, a beautiful stained glass window was dedicated. This window on the South side of the church was given by Mr. Fred Forster in memory of his wife, Elizabeth. During the same year the Church, Parish Hall and Rectory were repainted.

On August 31, 1949, the Rev. Cyril Clarke resigned and was replaced on September 3 by Rev. F.C. Musson.

Another stained glass window, in memory of Mr. Reginald Hatfield, an early member of the church and pioneer rancher, was dedicated on April 3, 1950. This window, placed on the North Side of the church, was presented by the Hatfield family in England.

In the summer of 1951 extensive renovations and enlargement of the Rectory were completed. In 1952, through the combined efforts of the Senior and Junior groups of St. John's Guild, a Reredos was presented to the church, in memory of the men of the parish who gave their lives in the Second World War, 1939-1945. A framed Honour Roll with the men's names inscribed hangs in the church. The Reredos was dedicated on December 14th in that same year by Bishop Calvert.

Rev. Mr. Musson resigned in September, 1952, due to ill health.

A new hardwood floor was laid in the church early in 1953.

On April 26, 1953, the Rev. Eric Scott (and family) arrived from England to take charge of "The Foothills Mission" and he is the present Rector of this historic Church of St. John the Evangelist.

Built before the Diocese of Calgary was created, St. John's claims to be the oldest Anglican Church in Alberta in continuous use over the past 70 years: and it looks forward with great hope to many more years of life and witness among the people of this pleasant foothills country.

## NOTES

The furnishings of St. John's Church were mostly given by the pioneers and other devoted Church members who supported St. John's in later years. It is believed that it will prove of interest to many people to record these gifts not already noted, as far as it is possible from existing records or word of mouth. The original Altar, Font, Lectern, Prayer Desk and some pews were church furnishings at the time of building. Some pews were given by families—the first pew under the pulpit was given by the Scobie family, and later cut for choir stalls. The present front pew is the Robert Kerr pew (Mr. Kerr, an early member, was killed in the South African War).

In 1903, through the efforts of Jonas Jones and congregational donations, an organ was purchased.

At the time that the first narrow gauge railway between Medicine Hat and Lethbridge was being constructed, James Connolly, a teamster freighting supplies to Pincher Creek, and knowing of the need of a bell for the new church in Pincher Creek, procured the bell from the station and presented it to St. John's, where it still hangs in the belfry.

A new Altar of oak, hand made by a Mr. Hughes, was given by Mr. and Mrs. Edward Faithorn about 1904 or 1905. The Faithorn family also gave a set of communion vessels, brass vases and chant books in the early 1900's.

The sanctuary chair was given by Mrs. George Berry (date unknown), and hymn brackets and litany desk by Mrs. George Gill in 1915. Mr. Harold Butcher presented the Pulpit about 1917 or 1918.



The following poem was written by Mr. A. L. Freebairn on the occasion of the 50th anniversary celebration of St. John's.

## FROM OUT ITS WALLS

(A tribute to St. John's Anglican Church, Pincher Creek)

by A. L. Freebairn

I have stood enthralled in Westminster —  
     Where kings have knelt to pray;  
 I have felt the thrill of pageantry  
     In Abbeys old and grey;  
 I have marvelled at their grandeur,  
     Their dignity and might —  
 But St. John's Episcopalian  
     Brings a greater thrill to-night.

Those old historic Abbeys  
     Symbolize an age that's gone,  
 This Church is Christ's own Herald  
     Of another Empire's dawn.  
 Where neighbors meet to worship —  
     In equality of worth —  
 To hasten on the Kingdom  
     Of our Saviour here on earth.

Its walls are unpretentious  
     And it lacks all ornate show,  
 But it's oh, so rich in memories  
     Of the days of long ago.  
 When brave hearts and courageous  
     Faced the dangers of the West,  
 When the early frontier settlers  
     Gave of his, or hers, the best.

Its scrolls are made illustrious  
     With names from out the past  
 Who broke the trails for you and me,  
     'Tis ours to hold them fast.  
 And on the far flung battle fields  
     Their sons took up the fight  
 For God, The King, and country,  
     For Empire and the Right.

Long may St. John's, at morn or eve,  
     Sound forth upon the air,  
 The gladsome pealing of the bells  
     To call its flock to prayer.  
 And may the records of the past  
     Inspire to carry on,  
 Until God's peace shall bring to earth  
     The greater Empire's dawn.



